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SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Office of African and Latin American Analysis

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Burundi: Forces Determining Alternative Outcomes ☐

Ethnic extremism is driving the cycles of violence that threaten to plunge Burundi into its seventh communal slaughter since independence from Belgium in 1962. Last month alone over 1,000 Burundians died in ethnic violence, 100,000 were displaced, and 25,000 fled into neighboring countries. We judge that shifts in the balance of power between extremists and moderates are the dominant factor responsible for alternating periods of significantly increased violence and temporary stability. ☐

Snapshot of the Status Quo ☐

During the last year, repeated upsurges in attacks by Hutu insurgents and Tutsi youth gangs strained the fragile cooperation between the Hutu and Tutsi political centers to nearly the breaking point. In our judgment, three forces are contributing to Burundi's current downward spiral.

- Ethnic Exclusion. Tutsi supremacists reject powersharing with Hutus, claiming that Hutu authorities will try to exterminate the Tutsis, as nearly happened in Rwanda. Efforts to introduce Hutus into the Burundian military, for example, are generally believed to have triggered the bloody 1993 coup attempt in which 50,000 Burundians died. Currently, Tutsi extremists are demanding that new regional governors be Tutsi Army officers; virtually all 5,000 new Army recruits are Tutsis.
- Political Violence. The burgeoning Hutu insurgency led by Leonard Nyangoma's Front for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) is gaining support among Hutu political leaders and the Hutu population as their only means to force Tutsis into restoring the Hutu-dominated government elected in 1993. The FDD--the largest of the three Hutu insurgent groups--is conducting a new offensive since late May following a six-week lull. Tutsi extremists employ political violence through youth gangs, supported by sympathetic elements in the security services. Tutsi militias are arming and are believed responsible for the recent wave of assassinations of prominent Hutus, ☐ Elements of the Army continue to participate in massacres of Hutu civilians.

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- Political Polarization. Extremists in both groups have proven adept at using ethnicity to manipulate their largely illiterate populations into supporting supremacist positions. Moreover, assassinations and intimidation have robbed the Hutu and Tutsi political center of strong leaders able to openly discuss and negotiate the sensitive issues of ethnic reconciliation and powersharing. The Tutsi Prime Minister and senior Tutsi Army officers [] [] fear being killed if they publicly advocate such talks. Hutu parliamentarians are abandoning President Ntibantunganya to support FDD leader Nyangoma. []

Ingredients for Escalating Violence... []

If ethnic extremists succeed in dominating either the Tutsi or Hutu political factions, the risk of large-scale killings--similar to the levels of killing in October 1993 in which 50,000-100,000 were killed in less than two months--would increase dramatically. []

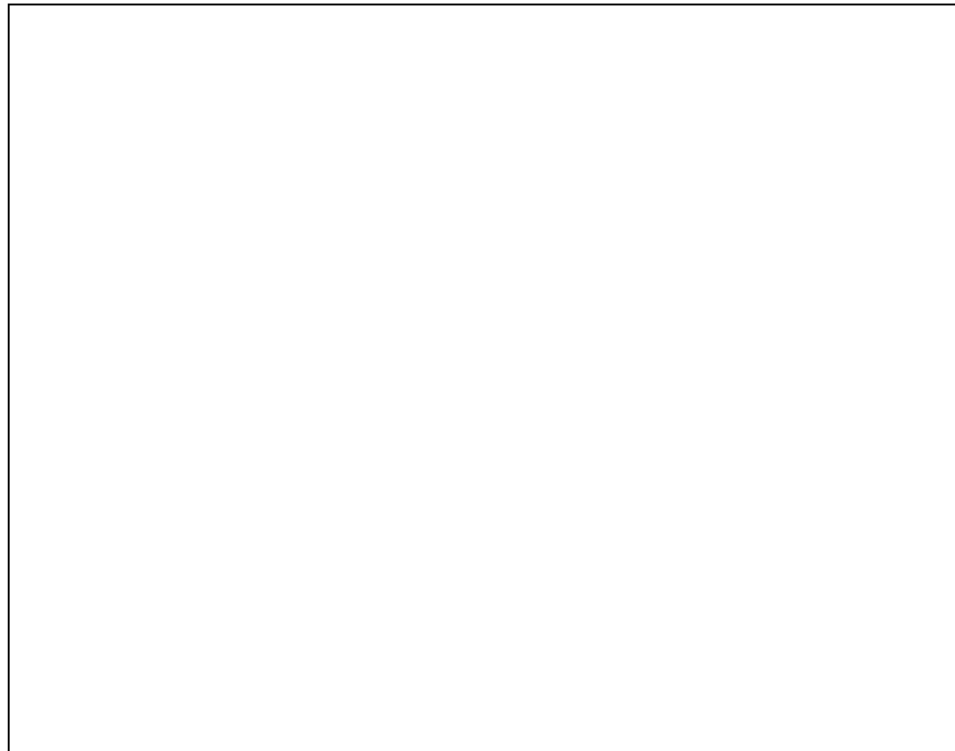
Developments that united Tutsi extremists with a sympathetic military--the alliance behind the 1993 coup attempt--would be the most likely recipe for an ethnic bloodbath. As they have before, Tutsi extremists would become more active if they:

- Feared Tutsi moderates were preparing to crack down on extremists, undercut the power of the Army, or allow Hutu politicians to exercise power.
- Believed that an international military force was preparing to intervene, which in their view is the first step toward dissolving the Tutsi-dominated military.
- Perceived that Hutu insurgents were making major military gains. []

In a bid to take power, a Tutsi extremist-military alliance probably would mount a somewhat coordinated effort to assassinate Hutu and moderate Tutsi rivals in Bujumbura, kill local Hutu leaders, finish cleansing Hutus from major towns, and launch military sweeps throughout the country to intimidate the general Hutu population. Countrywide violence would almost certainly spark a large-scale exodus of Hutu refugees into already overburdened neighboring countries. []

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In response to a sharp spike in the number of Hutus being killed--perhaps as a consequence of a Tutsi extremist powergrab--the insurgents might become convinced that a broader civil war is necessary to drive the Tutsis from power or incite an international military force to intervene. As part of a strategy to incite a general Hutu rebellion, Hutu extremists would likely urge Hutus to kill Tutsi civilians, triggering counter massacres by the Tutsi security forces. To lead this wider rebellion, however, the insurgents would probably need to unify the three Hutu insurgent groups--a dim prospect at this juncture--and obtain significant amounts of additional weapons.

...Or the Road to Reconciliation? ☐

If Hutu and Tutsi moderates were able to reign in and begin to isolate the extremists--as they tried earlier this year--prospects would improve for negotiating a political settlement and cease-fire. Calls for an ethnically balanced military and genuine political and economic powersharing have been part of every domestic and international effort to bring peace to Burundi. In our judgment, however, breaking the cycle of violence requires Burundi's elites to commit themselves to a common national identity, institutionalize ethnic cooperation rather than separatism, and agree to confidence-building mechanisms that include international arbitration--an extremely tall

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order unlikely to be achieved in the short term. The prospects for such a settlement would increase if:

- Tutsi moderates were able to severely limit extremist influence in the security forces and civil service. Extremists would also need to be denied access to public and foreign funds--a difficult task given the difficulty in gaining the cooperation of European countries, where we believe most of their assets are located.
- Tutsi militias and youth gangs were disarmed and disbanded.
- The Army's capability were weakened, perhaps as a result of an arms embargo or flagging morale over lack of pay, causing more Tutsis to consider negotiating at least an interim cease-fire to protect Tutsi interests.
- Hutu politicians and insurgents united behind Hutu leaders committed to protecting minority rights for Tutsis. Such leadership is critical if the Tutsi establishment is to have the confidence to negotiate a comprehensive reconciliation package.
- Hutu insurgents lost their access to safehavens and areas of resupply in neighboring countries.

This memorandum was prepared at the request of National Security Adviser Anthony Lake by
 Office of African and Latin American Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and
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Status of Peace Initiatives

A number of diplomatic efforts are now underway to stop the killing and establish the framework for political talks. [redacted] these efforts are generating considerable pressure on Burundi's major players to negotiate, but unless some tangible benefits to both sides are produced soon, the Tutsi and Hutu protagonists may feel that they must intensify their violence in order to wrest concessions from the other side.

Ending Violence

Cease-Fire Under Consideration. The FDD insurgents, under strong Western and regional pressure, claim they are willing to implement a cease-fire and begin talks provided the Burundian Army is restricted to barracks. Tutsi moderates are demanding that the insurgents first lay down arms. Tutsi extremists are threatening renewed violence if FDD leader Nyangoma is included in talks.

Arms Flows Targeted. Zairian President Mobutu says he will curb insurgent arms flows as part of a cease-fire. Tutsis are pressing for an arms embargo against Zaire to curb weapons smuggling into Burundi.

Hutu Rebel Radio Broadcasting. Tutsis insist that the radio cease broadcasting, claiming it spreads ethnic hate. Insurgents say the radio criticizes the government, but is not a hate radio, and that they have recently moderated the radio's message. Zairians say they need Western technical help to close down the radio.

Fostering Political Negotiations

Public Nyerere-Mediated Talks Troubled. With little progress made during the first round of talks in late April, talks between Hutu and Tutsi political leaders resumed in Mwanza, Tanzania under former President Nyerere's mediation on Tuesday appear again to be deadlocked. Hutu political leaders are backing Nyerere's effort to reconfigure the government to reflect the Hutu victory in the 1993 elections. The dominant Tutsi party reportedly believes, however, that Nyerere is biased toward the Hutus and is not working to protect their minority rights. The Tutsi Army says it will not participate in political talks, and Tutsi extremists claim they are being excluded from the talks. Hutu insurgents say they accept Nyerere's effort.

Private Sant Egidio Talks Ongoing. The Prime Minister and the Defense Minister--both Tutsi--have sent representatives to participate in exploratory talks in Rome being mediated by the Catholic Sant Egidio lay organization. Hutu insurgents have also sent representatives, but are reportedly unhappy with the talks' exploratory nature.

French Proposal. Paris hopes to convene an international conference under UN auspices. There has been virtually no progress in organizing this meeting, however.

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